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ABSTRACT

Ways in which a publication on sex discrimination has been used by colleges and universities are described. The publication is entitled "The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?" In addition to identifying over 35 kinds of behaviors by which faculty may treat men and women students differently, the publication discussed in this document includes over 100 recommendations for evaluation and change. The paper, which was the first national report on differential treatment of men and women students in the college classroom, was distributed to colleges across the county. Examples of the use of this paper to implement specific programs on campus are described, and persons who can provide additional information are identified. The different approaches taken in response to the paper involve: specialized campus dissemination efforts; workshops for faculty, administrators, and/or students; in-class use to increase students' awareness of issues; and campus research projects and surveys. A total of 17 college efforts are described. It is suggested that campus research may be improved by: (1) educating students about subtle behaviors in advance of administering a survey so they have the opportunity to observe whether these behaviors occur in their classrooms; and (2) including outside observation of classrooms as well as a survey component. (SW)

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PROJECT ON THE STATUS AND EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Association of American Colleges
1818 R Street N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009

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SELECTED ACTIVITIES USING

"THE CLASSROOM CLIMATE: A CHILLY ONE FOR WOMEN?"

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Project on the Status and Education of WOMEN

ASSOCIATION of AMERICAN COLLEGES
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SELECTED ACTIVITIES USING "THE CLASSROOM CLIMATE: A CHILLY ONE FOR WOMEN?"

INTRODUCTION

In 1982, with support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the Project on the Status and Education of Women (PSEW) published *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?*, the first national report on differential treatment of men and women students in the college classroom. Differential behaviors are often fairly obvious when they **single out** women—such as using sexist humor to "spice up a dull subject" or making disparaging comments about women as a group—but more often they are subtle and inadvertent and **overlook** or **discount** women. Frequently neither faculty nor students are aware that any differential treatment has occurred. However, the self-confidence, academic goals and career ambitions of women students may suffer. Subtle faculty behaviors that may have this effect include those such as:

- interrupting women more frequently than men—or allowing them to be disproportionately interrupted by others in class;
- calling directly on men more often than on women;
- asking questions followed by eye contact with men students only—as if only men were expected to respond;
- addressing the class as if no women were present ("Suppose your wife . . . ?") or using classroom examples in which the professional is always "he," the client or patient always "she;" and
- overlooking women when, for example, talking informally with students; choosing research or teaching assistants; nominating students for awards and prizes; or writing letters of recommendation.

In addition to identifying over 35 kinds of behaviors by which faculty may treat men and women students differently, the paper includes over 100 recommendations for evaluation and change.

The Classroom Climate was disseminated to colleges and universities across the country, and the response has been overwhelming: specialized campus dissemination efforts, workshops and lectures,[1] research projects, and surveys have been conducted at many institutions. The paper has sparked a number of other activities, including sessions at conferences. The Project on the Status and Education of Women has received innumerable requests for more information about how individuals and institutions can use the paper to implement specific programs on campus or elsewhere. This sample compilation was developed to show how *The Classroom Climate* has been used in numerous ways.

The projects highlighted here represent only a small sample of the many undertaken, and have been selected to indicate the diversity of uses at different types of institutions. This resource list includes descriptions of various approaches as well as persons who can provide additional information about each. In some instances, activities not yet completed are included.

> *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?* is available for $3.00, prepaid, from the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009. Bulk rates of $1.25 for 15-100 copies and 75¢ for orders over 100 are also available. The Project is currently writing a companion paper about the climate for women students in out-of-classroom settings.

INSTITUTIONAL DISSEMINATION

Many colleges and universities have disseminated copies or reprints of *The Classroom Climate*[2] on an institution-wide basis. In addition to stimulating awareness of classroom climate issues, such official dissemination can help legitimize climate as an area of concern, and signal an institutional commitment to improving the learning climate for women.

In some instances, campuses have devised their own version of the paper in pamphlet, booklet or newsletter format. It has also been discussed extensively in campus media, including student newspapers, faculty bulletins and the like. Various offices at different institutions have implemented dissemination, and have sent a version of the paper to trustees, administrators, faculty, and/or students, often with a cover letter suggesting how the paper might be used and with related materials attached.

University of Delaware

The Office of Women's Affairs developed a packet including a condensed version of *The Classroom Climate;* a summary of a student's award-winning paper about the classroom climate at

This resource list was compiled by Liz Johnson, a Project intern from Colby College (ME), with the assistance of Roberta M. Hall, Associate Director for Programs.

THE PROJECT ON THE STATUS AND EDUCATION OF WOMEN OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES provides information concerning women in education, and works with institutions, government agencies and other associations and programs affecting women in higher education. The Project is funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York and The Ford Foundation. Publication of these materials does not necessarily constitute endorsement by AAC, Carnegie Corporation of New York or The Ford Foundation, or any of its sponsoring organizations. Copies of this publication may be ordered for $1.00 from the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009. Bulk copies are available.

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Delaware (see Univ. of Del., p. 4); a quiz for faculty modeled after the Student-Faculty Communication Checklist in *The Classroom Climate;* and statistics on the distribution of men and women students and faculty at the University of Delaware. The packets are being distributed by department chairs to all faculty for discussion in department meetings. Staff of the Office of Women's Affairs has also met informally with the Deans Council and with small groups of department chairs to discuss climate issues, as well as with particular departments requesting discussion. A proposal for instructional development related to classroom climate has received funding, and a publication, "Teacher's Image in the Classroom," is available at no charge.

Contact: Mae Carter, Special Assistant to the Provost and Executive Director, Commission on the Status of Women, Office of Women's Affairs, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716; (302) 451-8063.

Michigan State University

The Division of Women's Programs published two fact sheets entitled "Achieving Campus Equality" based on *The Classroom Climate*. The first is written to help faculty and administrators understand sex discrimination on campus. It describes discriminatory behaviors; discusses special populations such as minority women and older women; includes recommendations for change; and explains MSU's grievance procedures. The second is designed to answer students' questions, such as "What is campus sex discrimination?" "How can those behaviors affect me?" "What can I do if I think I'm being discriminated against?" "How can I encourage a positive classroom environment?"

Contact: Diana V. R. Algra, Director, Division of Women's Programs, Department of Human Relations, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824; (517) 353-3922.

Pennsylvania State University

With the support of the President, the coordinator of the women's studies program sent *The Classroom Climate* to members of the board of trustees, all academic deans, and all women's studies students. A meeting to discuss climate was held for executive officers of the various campuses and all academic deans. As a result, the board has requested data about faculty on the basis of gender, and there is interest in undertaking a university-wide study of classroom climate.

Contact: Sabrina Chapman, Coordinator, Women's Studies Program/Center, 204 Hetzel Union Building, University Park, PA 16801; (814) 863-4025.

California State University, Northridge

The Women's Studies Program Committee, with joint sponsorship from the Counseling Center and the School of Humanities, published a six-page booklet, "Avoiding Sexual Discrimination in the Classroom," largely based on *The Classroom Climate*. Distributed to all faculty, the booklet was accompanied by a letter from the university's president encouraging professors to read it, save it and use its recommendations. "Avoiding Sexual Discrimination" describes the kinds of faculty behaviors that discourage women students, explains their impact in the classroom, and recommends ways to improve the climate for women. The Committee plans to distribute the booklet to administrators throughout the California State University system, and to women's studies programs nationwide.

Contact: Evalyn Michaelson, Coordinator, Women's Studies, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330; (213) 885-3331.

Harvard University (MA)

The Assistant Dean of Harvard College disseminated an abbreviated version of *The Classroom Climate* along with a memorandum to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Following this initial dissemination, the paper was also sent to many others on campus, including teaching assistants and fellows. The paper sparked group discussions about climate issues. It was also used as a primary background paper for Harvard's recent revision of its policy on sexual harassment.

Contact: Marlyn Lewis, Assistant Dean of Harvard College, University Hall 3, Harvard College, Cambridge, MA 02138; (617) 495-1560.

Rutgers University (NJ)

The President of the University sent *The Classroom Climate* to the provost of each campus with a cover letter asking that each evaluate his or her campus, discuss the paper with deans and directors, develop appropriate programs and provide information on resulting activities. At Rutgers University, Camden, for example, the Provost's office disseminated *The Classroom Climate* and "Tell Someone," a brochure about sexual harassment, to the Dean's Council where they were discussed at length. Deans are to discuss these issues with faculty. The Sociology and Anthropology departments are planning to develop a workshop on sexual harassment and classroom climate issues.

Contact: Corinne Webb, Associate Provost, Office of the President, Rutgers University, 311 N. 5th St., Camden, NJ 08103; (609) 737-6174.

PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS

Many institutions and organizations have used *The Classroom Climate* as the basis for workshops designed for faculty, administrators and/or students, and for longer term programs to stimulate awareness of the issues and begin the process of change. Ranging from formal workshops and presentations to less formal discussions, these activities have often been enhanced by sponsorship from top administrators and the participation of a core group of concerned faculty. The following descriptions suggest the range of possibilities.

University of Maine, Orono and **Bangor Community College**

Funded by the Office for Academic Affairs, the Women in the Curriculum Committees at the University of Maine, Orono and Bangor Community College have used and distributed *The Classroom Climate* in a variety of projects and workshops, both jointly and separately, and have also ordered the paper in bulk to make it available to faculty free of charge. At Bangor, *The Classroom Climate* was the basis for two faculty development workshops to be followed by a workshop for students in Fall 1984. At the University of Maine, Orono, it provided a focal point for discussion about the relationship between course content and classroom dynamics at departmental workshops for faculty, a faculty symposium, and brown-bag lunch discussions. A limited number of copies of a handbook developed, "Toward Excellence in Equity: The Scholarship on Women as a Catalyst for Change in the University," which includes articles by faculty about classroom interaction, are available free.

Contact: Jo Ann Fritsche, Director, Women's Development Program or Deborah Pearlman, Associate Director, Women in the Curriculum Program, 251 Aubert Hall, University of Maine, Orono, Orono, ME 04469; (207) 581-1227.

Project EFFECT, The American University

This two-year project—Effectiveness and Equity in College Teaching—will result in the development, implementation and dissemination of a faculty development model program and materials to attain sex-equity in classroom interaction. During the project's first year, audiovisual and written material are being developed and university-wide awareness workshops on quality and equality in education held. Approximately 25 faculty from diverse disciplines will be selected for skills development. They will review videotapes for sex bias in faculty-student interaction; analyze videotapes of their own teaching; and work with colleagues to develop equitable teaching strategies. During the second year, these faculty will use their new skills in their own classrooms and receive feedback from trained observers. They may also participate, with Project EFFECT staff, in a dissemination conference which will launch the national dissemination of the project's materials.

Contact: Myra Sadker and David Sadker, Co-directors, Project EFFECT, Roper Hall, School of Education, The American University, Washington, DC 20016; (202) 686-2188.

Northeastern Illinois University

A faculty workshop based on *The Classroom Climate* was held as part of a Title III Seminar Series designed to assist faculty in addressing sex bias in curriculum materials, classroom attitudes, and behavior (Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 provides funds for developing institutions and those which serve disadvantaged students.) The workshop included four sessions: "What Do I Do in My Classroom?" "Missing Voices in Traditional Knowledge," "Northeastern's Resources on Women and Gender" and "Rethinking the Ways We Teach." Materials included a faculty self-check quiz, guidelines for the use of gender-inclusive langauge, selected criteria for evaluating curriculum materials, and excerpts from *The Classroom Climate*.

Contact: Martha E. Thompson, Title III Faculty Liaison, Associate Professor of Sociology/Women's Studies, Northeastern Illinois University, 5500 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625; (312) 583-4050, x8200.

University of Nebraska, Lincoln

The Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women and the Teaching and Learning Center co-sponsored a month-long campus-wide program for faculty, administrators, students and staff around classroom climate issues, and proclaimed the 1982-83 academic year as "Year of the Learning Environment." Activities included workshops and informal discussion groups for faculty, with a proposed follow-up workshop for students to help them identify and constructively respond to differential treatment. A condensed version of *The Classroom Climate* was reprinted in the faculty newsletter, *Teaching at UNL*, along with a faculty self-check quiz based on the paper.

Contact: Delivee Wright, Director, Teaching and Learning Center, 1220 Seaton Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0623; (402) 472-3079.

IN-CLASS USE

The Classroom Climate has been used as required reading in many classes, and has become part of the regular curriculum in some. It has been assigned in a wide range of disciplines, including Women's Studies, Sociology, English and Political Science. In general, the purpose of in-class use have been to increase students' awareness of climate issues and to provide a basis for field studies and other projects.

The University of Texas at El Paso

A professor in the Department of Political Science assigned *The Classroom Climate* for the upper division course, "Women, Power and Politics" to sensitize students to climate issues and to teach research design. Students used the paper as the basis for formulating hypotheses which they tested in their own classes through questionnaires, interviews and other techniques. Papers were presented to the class, and several were selected to be reprinted in the Women's Week issue of the campus newspaper. *The Classroom Climate* will be used similarly in coming semesters.

Contact: Kathy Staudt, Associate Professor of Political Science, Dept. of Political Science, Benedict Hall, The University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX 79968-0547; (915) 747-5227.

Denison University (OH)

The Classroom Climate was used as a resource in an interdisciplinary Women's Studies course. The professor distributed the paper to each of ten teaching assistants for comments and reactions. The teaching assistants then presented the paper to their individual discussion groups within the class. Each group discussed its own "climate," noting specific behaviors and gender interactions. Students were assigned brief papers based on their observations. As a result of this experience, many students reported an increased awareness of the problems engendered by discriminatory behaviors, a change in some of their own behaviors, and a greater willingness to bring discriminatory behavior to the attention of faculty and other students. The professor will use the paper in a faculty development program, the Danforth Summer Program in the Liberal Arts, sponsored by the Lilly Endowment.

Contact: Ann Fitzgerald, Women's Studies, Denison University, Granville, OH 43025; (614) 587-6312.

RESEARCH, REPORTS AND SURVEYS

Numerous campus research projects have been undertaken by institutional offices, individual faculty members and students as a result of *The Classroom Climate*. Diverse in their approach and focus, these projects are often geared to an examination of the climate within a particular institution and/or discipline.

A Note on Surveys

Many of the instruments developed are campus environment surveys which include questions about classroom interaction. Some seek information from both faculty and students, others from students alone. Climate surveys can help identify local problems and suggest directions for change. However, because differential treatment of men and women students (such as making more eye contact with men after asking questions, or interrupting women more often than men) may be very subtle and seem quite "normal," students may not notice it when it occurs. Consequently, when asked specific questions, students may acknowledge only more overt instances of discriminatory behavior (such as using sexist humor as a classroom device, or making disparaging comments about women), but deny that subtle differential patterns of interaction occur. To provide a more accurate overview, two possible correctives are: (1) to educate students about subtle behaviors well in advance of administering a climate survey so they have the opportunity to observe whether or not these behaviors occur in their classrooms; and/or (2) to include outside observation of classrooms as well as a survey component.

Bowling Green State University (OH)

The Women's Studies Program distributed copies of *The*

Classroom Climate widely on campus—to upper level administrators, faculty, student life personnel, undergraduate and graduate students. As a result, the student Sexual Harassment Task Force has used it extensively for background information, and the presidentially-appointed Task Force on the Status of Women and Minorities looked at climate issues through in-class observation and surveys. Their report, modeled after *The Classroom Climate*, was published in full in the campus newspaper.

Contact: Susan Arpad, Director, Women's Studies Program, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403; (419) 372-2620.

University of Delaware

The Classroom Climate provided background for a student's research paper which won the 1983 President's Award for Research on Women. The paper, "The University of Delaware Experience: Different for Women and Men?" by undergraduate Robin Huntington was based on data derived from observation of 40 classes. Among its findings: male students speak more often, for longer periods of time, and receive more encouragement than female students. Results are discussed in terms of theories of role modeling, stereotyping, self-fulfilling prophesy and fear of success. A summary of the paper is being disseminated by the Office of Women's Affairs as part of a packet on climate issues (see page 1).

Contact: Mae Carter, Special Assistant to the Provost and Executive Director, Commission on the Status of Women, Office of Women's Affairs, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716; (302) 451-8063.

Rhode Island College

The Classroom Climate was used as required reading in an introductory women's studies course over two semesters. Students were given the option of doing field studies based on the paper. Results showed a wide variation in climate from classroom to classroom. Students found about half the classes observed had warm climates: faculty were attentive to using both "he" and "she," making eye contact with students of both sexes, and encouraging discussion. The other half of the classrooms, however, were indeed chilly: professors interrupted women more often than men, made more eye contact with men, used sexist language, and made disparaging comments about women as a group. The professor reported these findings in the faculty newsletter, and climate issues have become a continuing topic for informal discussion and a potential focus for faculty workshops.

Contact: Emily Stier Adler, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Rhode Island College, 600 Mount Pleasant Ave., Providence, RI 02908; (401) 456-8026.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Using *The Classroom Climate* as a background, women graduate students and research staff in the Laboratory for Computer Science and the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory described the differential treatment they have encountered in a report, *Barriers to Equality in Academia: Women in Computer Science at MIT*. Included are responses from administrators and a men's student group, as well as a list of recommendations. The report was distributed to deans and department heads throughout the institution, and to all students in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Small discussions among students and faculty, as well as a meeting of over 200 faculty and students in the Computer Science area, were organized to discuss problems identified in the report. Some observers believe the departmental climate has improved as a result: climate issues can now be discussed openly and women's complaints about behaviors such as sexist humor and disparaging comments are taken seriously. A number of copies of the report are available.

Contact: Marilyn Pierce, Administrator, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Room 38-444, MIT, Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 253-4603.

University of Maryland

Based largely on issues raised in *The Classroom Climate*, a major survey on climate issues is being readied for field testing. "The Campus Environment Survey" is designed to collect data on the classroom environment, interactions in the larger campus setting, information about influences on career choice, and personal self-assessment in areas such as self-confidence and leadership ability. Now in the initial phases of validity and reliability testing, the survey is slated to be used in several projects which will analyze students' responses in relation to sex, race and age.

Contact: Linda Blankenship, Advisement Center, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Catonsville, MD 21228; (301) 455-2443 or 596-4878, or Mary M. Leonard, Associate Professor of Counseling, University of Maryland, College Park, College Park, MD 20742; (301) 454-2931.

OTHER USES

- A student involved in a grievance procedure at a large northeastern university used *The Classroom Climate* to indicate to the hearing panel the several kinds of discrimination and gender harassment she had experienced. The paper's examples allowed her to help the panel understand and categorize the various types of incidents, and also served to legitimize her concerns.
- Following an instance in which an individual woman student sent a copy of *The Classroom Climate* to a professor who habitually treated women in a discriminatory manner, the institution's Association of Women Students ordered copies of the paper in bulk. Upon request from a student, the Association will send a copy to offending faculty members. Thus, individual women students can ensure that the paper is received by faculty who need to become more aware of the issues without fear of jeopardizing their own subsequent performance and evaluation.
- Many organizations, including education associations such as the Association of American Colleges, the Association for Communication Administration, and the Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S., have used *The Classroom Climate* as the basis for sessions at their annual meetings.

Notes:

[1]The many presentations made by PSEW staff are not included.

[2]PSEW has given limited reprint rights in these instances.